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THE RETREAT OF THE SPANIARDS FROM NEW MEXICO IN 1680, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF EL PASO

II

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IV. THE RETREAT OF THE TWO DIVISIONS TO LA SALINETA

Having despatched the above letter to Parraga with orders for the Rio Abajo people to wait for him, no other *autos* were drawn up by Otermín and no further communication passed between the two divisions until the northern refugees joined those at Fray Cristóbal on September 13. With all the survivors of the province united in one body, Otermín determined to call a council of all the officers and men of experience and prestige in his camp, that they might help to decide what ought to be done in the light of present conditions.¹ Accordingly, on the same day this decision of the governor was made public in the camp by voice of the public crier.² After the meeting was assembled, the first to avail themselves of the opportunity which Otermín gave for all to express their opinions, were eight of the missionaries. They stated briefly, though characteristically, that as "liege vassals of his majesty, and as his ministers in those parts for the administration of the Holy Sacrament, and for instructing in the Holy Faith both Spaniards and natives" they were willing "without any repugnance to follow the person of his Excellency and the royal standard in whatever resolution or determination he and the other persons might agree upon."³

Following the religious a joint statement was made and signed by the *maestres de campo*, Francisco Gómez Robledo, Thome Domínguez de Mendoza, Juan Domínguez de Mendoza,

¹"Auto (de Otermín)," in *Auttos tocantes*, 32-33.

²Auto of Xavier, in *Auttos tocantes*, 33.

³Auto of the Religious at Fray Cristóbal, in *Auttos tocantes*, 34. This *auto* was signed by the following: Father Nicolás Hurtado, Father Gómez de la Cadena, Father Antonio de Sierra, Father Thomas de Tobalina, Father Francisco Muñoz, Father Juan de Zaballeta, Father Joseph de Bonillo, Father Andrés Duran.

Diego de Trujillo, and the lieutenant-general, Alonso García. After summarizing the events of the retreat, they agreed that because of the miserable condition of all, and especially of so many women and children, and since there was little prospect of any alleviation of their hunger, or any way to avenge or restrain the taunts of the enemy in that desert place, the retreat should be continued; and that after the defenseless ones had been established in a place of safety, a reconquest should be attempted, though they feared this would be difficult, since the enemy was in possession of a great many firearms and other weapons.¹ This opinion having been read, it was agreed to by sixteen *sarjentos mayores*, captains and soldiers.² Lastly, in much the same tone, the Cabildo of Santa Fé went on record as conforming with the decision expressed by the *maestres de campo*.³ The main reasons stated by this body had all been stressed by others who had preceded them. But the Cabildo in addition emphasized the fact that for the 2500 persons in the camp, of whom only one hundred were soldiers, there were less than twenty *fanegas* of corn; and it was pointed out that it would be necessary to send to the jurisdictions of the Mansos Indians to secure provisions, because the enemy was possessed of all the sources of supply within a radius of forty leagues from the camp where it then was. For these and other manifest reasons they were in favor of proceeding to a place of safety. After reaching such a place, they thought, the viceroy should be asked for reënforcements so that the reconquest of the province could be attempted.

Having heard the opinions thus expressed by the principal men in the army, being in great need of supplies, "in a place where the earth was so parched and notched" that no pasture could be found for the cattle, and for many other reasons, Otermín would doubtless have ordered the army to proceed at once but for a letter which he received from Father Ayeta. This letter was written from the "Passo" on September 8.⁴ From it Otermín learned

¹Auto of the *maestres de campo* at Fray Cristóbal, in *Auttos tocantes*, 34-35.

²Auto of the *sarjentos mayores* and others at Fray Cristóbal, in *Auttos tocantes*, 35-36.

³"Paraser del Caydo (de Santa Fé)," in *Auttos tocantes*, 37-38.

⁴Ayeta mentions having learned through a letter written to him by García of Otermín's escape. This was evidently the letter of September

that Ayeta, who had not had time to receive his message of September 7 from Sorocco, was in doubt regarding the needs of the refugees, notwithstanding the request for aid which had been sent him through García's letter of September 4. The following is an extract from the letter addressed by Ayeta to the governor:

And I say Sir, that I find myself confused on account of having had no notice of your Excellency's intentions. In order to learn what I should do, and in order to relieve myself of that doubt, I send the bearers in all haste, advising that there be no more delay than what your Excellency may cause. I now have everything ready, and the wagons prepared to move. If your Excellency should decide to remain there, fortifying yourself in some spot, I beg that, protecting your person, you come here in order that we may consult on certain matters pertaining to the service of both majesties, and in order to hasten by some time the joy of seeing you, because I am determined, according as it may be proper, to go in person to give notice of what has happened to the viceroy, since all can not be said by writing.

After stating further that he had sent news of the burning of Santa Fé and of the governor's wound to Mexico by Father Nicolás López, Ayeta concluded with the injunction and hope that Otermín would join him at El Paso at once.¹

Immediately upon the receipt of the letter, in order that the least possible delay might follow this already unfortunate doubt, Otermín decided to postpone his decision in regard to the opinions just expressed in the *junta*, and instead ordered that twelve soldiers should be equipped to go with him on the journey to see Father Ayeta. In company with these, Ayeta's secretary, who had come with Leiva and his men,² and another religious, Otermín set out soon afterward, leaving in command in his place the *maestres de campo*, Francisco Gómez and Alonzo García.³

Otermín proceeded with all haste down the river, and on September 18⁴ met Father Ayeta at the place called La Salineta, four

4 written by the lieutenant-general just after he learned that Otermín was relatively near.

¹Letter of Ayeta to Otermín, September 8, 1680, in *Auttos tocantes*, 41.

²"Carta del Padre Fr. Francisco de Ayeta escrita al R. P. Comisario General (December 20, 1680)," in *N. Mex. Doc.*, I, 543.

³"Autto (de Otermín)," in *Auttos tocantes*, 39.

⁴De Thoma (*Historia Popular de Nuevo México*, 93) erroneously states that all the New Mexican refugees reached La Salineta on September 18.

leagues above the monastery of Guadalupe del Paso. Ayeta, it seems, in the interval since he had written to Otermín on September 8 asking him to come to the pass of the Rio del Norte, had received the latter's communication sent from Socorro on September 7, asking that the supply wagons be started to meet the refugees at once. Accordingly Father Ayeta upon the receipt of this request had started from the pass with twenty-four wagons¹ of provisions, raiment, and munitions. He had apparently been unable to cross the river at El Paso, the usual fording place, and so had continued up the west side of the river. The progress of the wagons had been slow, however, for the heavy rains and the melting snow on the mountains had caused the stream to overflow, so that it covered the roads and all the adjacent meadows and lateral valleys (*ancones*). After proceeding about four leagues from Guadalupe under such difficulties, Ayeta had decided on the morning of September 18, at about 8 o'clock, to brave the dangers involved in an attempt to cross the swollen river. Accordingly six² spans of mules were hitched to the first wagon, and Ayeta himself accompanied by a number of skilled Indian swimmers, drove into the river. The water was higher and more dangerous, however, than had been supposed. It rose more than a *vora* above the bed of the wagon, not only damaging the contents, but endangering Father Ayeta's life. Finally the mules after much difficulty were able to reach a higher place where they secured footing, but the wagon remained fast in the middle of the stream. Seeing the impossibility of proceeding, Ayeta cut loose the half-drowned mules from the wagon. At this juncture Otermín and his escort from Fray Cristóbal arrived opposite the wagon on the east bank of the river. Otermín's men, taking in

¹Ayeta ("Carta del Padre Fr. Francisco de Ayeta escrita al R. P. Comisario General," in *N. Mex. Doc.*, I, 541) and Otermín ("Autto Y diligencia," in *Auttos tocantes*, 43) both state that Ayeta had twenty-four wagons when he reached La Salineta. There is, apparently, no foundation for Davis's statement (*The Spanish Conquest of New Mexico*, 298) that he set out from El Paso with four wagons.

²Otermín, who wrote on the same day the fording of the river was attempted but who was not an eye-witness, says, "el qual carro abiendolo puesto quatro andanas de mulas le arroxaron al Rio." (In "Autto Y diligencia," in *Auttos tocantes*, 43.) Ayeta, writing three months later of the same occurrence, says, "y alentando mi gente puse al carro Capitan seis andanas de acémilas." In "Carta del Padre Fr. Francisco de Ayeta escrita al R. P. Comisario General," in *N. Mex. Doc.*, I, 542.)

the situation, and realizing Father Ayeta's danger, hastened to his assistance, and bore him on their shoulders to a place of safety on the east bank. After much difficulty the wagon was extricated at about six o'clock in the evening, some four hours after Otermín's arrival. As soon as convenient Otermín and Ayeta entered into a consultation as to what should be done, and it was decided, since it was impossible to proceed further with the wagons, to have men swim their horses and transport supplies across the river, so that they might be sent to the needy ones that night. This was done, and the next day still another pack-train of supplies was started, both of which in due time reached their destination. These supplies, consisting of corn, hardtack, flour, chocolate, and sugar, the officers were instructed to distribute freely to all the people in both divisions, after which they were to continue the retreat south.¹

Otermín did not accompany the soldiers who went along to guard the supply trains, but at Ayeta's request stayed behind and crossed the river to make an inventory of the provisions in the wagons, as well as of the supplies that had been left at the monastery of Guadalupe, so that in case these should be found to be insufficient, others might be secured before the people arrived. Four days later, after having registered the amount of provisions in the wagons, and having returned from the monastery of Guadalupe where he had gone for the same purpose, Otermín drew up a report to the effect that in those two places there were 400 bushels of shelled corn and 400 head of cattle and sheep, all of which Father Ayeta said might be distributed to the people when they should arrive. But that the supply might not run short, Otermín sent out foraging parties to Casas Grandes, to Tarmaures, eighty leagues distant, and to other places, to buy all the corn and meat possible and bring them to El Paso.²

This was on September 22; nothing more is recorded of the movements either of those at La Salineta or of the main body of refugees until September 29. On that day, however, all the people had reached La Salineta, as is evidenced by an *auto* drawn up

¹For the events attending the attempted fording of the river by Ayeta and the subsequent occurrences see "Autto Y diligencia," in *Auttos tocantes*, 43; "Carta del Padre Fr. Francisco de Ayeta escrita al R. P. Comisario General," in *N. Mex. Doc.*, I, 541-4.

²"Autto y diligencia," in *Auttos tocantes*, 44.

by Otermín¹ on that day ordering a general review of the camp. By this time, practically speaking, New Mexico had been abandoned by the Spaniards. We now come to the story of their settlement in the vicinity of modern El Paso.

V. THE TEMPORARY CAMP AT LA SALINETA

(1) *The General Muster*.—Having assembled at La Salineta, a place within the present limits of Texas, all the survivors of the revolt, with the exception of those who had fled across the Rio Grande, and with their actual needs provided for through the generosity of Father Ayeta, it was now necessary for Otermín to form some permanent plan for the future. Hitherto the condition of the refugees had been such that only the most pressing needs could be considered and only tentative plans formulated. In fact, the situation had been such that time had not been taken to determine accurately their actual numbers and strength. Accordingly, in order that he might be guided in his decision by definite information regarding the number, quality, and equipment of the men capable of military service, and at the same time that a report might be made both of the survivors and those lost in the revolt, Otermín first of all ordered a review of all the people at La Salineta.² The order was proclaimed on the 29th of September, and on the same day the review began. As each man passed before the governor, he was accompanied by all the members of his family, and carried with him his personal property, including arms, ammunition, and provisions, a complete inventory being taken down and attested to by the man himself. These muster rolls fill some twelve folios of written matter (making twenty-six typewritten pages), hence it would be impracticable to record them all here. In order that their general character and the pitiful condition of the refugees may be seen, however, a few of the individual records have been selected at random and translated below:³

¹Whether or not Otermín went to meet Gómez and García is not stated, though such seem to have been his original intentions.

²"Auto Para pasar nuestra resena de armas cavallos y otras cosas," in *Autos tocantes*, 45; *Auto* of Otermín, *Ibid.*, 57.

³For the complete muster rolls from which these are taken, see *Autos tocantes*, 45-55; and 58-60.

At once, after the promulgation of the proclamation, the *maestre de campo* Francisco Xavier, *alcalde ordinario* of the first vote, passed muster as follows: with six very lean horses, useless for service; a sword; a dagger; a skin jacket; an arquebus; and a shield. He had been robbed by the enemy of all his goods. In witness whereof he signed it and declared that he had with him a family of four daughters, two sons, and a female servant.

Francisco Xavier.

Alcalde Ordinario. (rubric.)

The *maestre de campo* Pedro de Leiva, now serving in that capacity for the kingdom passed muster, as well as three sons, all of whom serve his majesty, all with their personal arms, and amongst them twenty-five horses, some of them in good condition and some lean. The enemy killed Leiva's wife, two young lady daughters, and two sons, soldiers in the *pueblo* of Galisteo, three grandsons, and a daughter-in-law. And of thirty servants which he had the enemy left him three, and robbed him and his sons of all their property. And he signed it.

Pedro de Leiva. (rubric.)

Pedro de Cuellar passed muster with four lean horses, a royal arquebuse and its equipment, and a boy who served him. The enemy killed his wife and daughter in the revolt, and robbed him, poor as he was. And he signed it.

Pedro de Cuellar. (rubric.)

Captain Francisco de Anaya passed muster on foot; personal arms; robbed by the enemy. They killed his wife and three [other] persons, children, relatives, and servants. Nothing was left him but that which he has on his back. And he signed it.

Francisco de Anaya. (rubric.)

The *sarjento mayor* Juan Lucero de Godoy, *alcalde ordinario* of the second vote, showed a sword, a dagger and an arquebuse; a lean horse; four sons, young men capable of bearing arms, all naked and without weapons; four daughters, young women; and five servants; state, married. And he signed it.

Juan Lucero de Godoy. (rubric.)

The *maestre de campo* Alonso García, lieutenant of government and war, and captain general of the jurisdictions of Rio Abajo,—state, married—, passed muster with eighty horses and five mules, all of the latter lean, suffering from lock-jaw, and worn out by service. He has three sons, two sons-in-law, all with their per-

sonal arms. They are supplied by the lieutenant-general. Two sons and his two sons-in-law are married and have twelve persons in their families, twenty-two servants, and another young man capable of bearing arms. He carries a royal arquebuse and has been robbed by the enemy. And he signed it.

Alonso García. (rubric.)

The *sarjento mayor* Luis de Quintana passed muster with four very lean horses; all his personal arms; an infant daughter; four servants; robbed of house and goods by the enemy. And he signed it.

Luis de Quintana. (rubric.)

Felipe Montoya, married, passed muster on foot, naked, very poor, with one tired horse and four sons. And he signed it.

Felipe Montoya. (rubric.)

Captain Roque de Madrid passed muster with three lean horses, two lean and tired mules, all his personal arms, his wife, and four small children. His house was robbed by the enemy, and [he is] extremely poor. And he signed it.

Roque de Madrid. (rubric.)

This muster was continued without interruption for three days when on October 1 a temporary halt was occasioned by a number of the people having gone without permission to the monastery of Guadalupe, whence they were scattering into Nueva Vizcaya. As soon as he learned of this, in order that the muster rolls might be completed, and that further delay might not be occasioned in completing the reports that were to be sent to the viceroy, Otermín, on October 1, sent Francisco Xavier to El Paso with a message to Joseph López de Gracia¹ (the lieutenant of Andrés López de Gracia, *alcalde mayor* of the valley of San Antonio de Casas Grandes),² who was at that time at Guadalupe, ordering him or any other officer of Nueva Vizcaya, to arrest and send back to La Salineta any person, no matter what his rank, character, or condition, who might attempt to cross the river into that province. Gracia promptly promised to put the order into effect, and requested Otermín to make this fact publicly known.³

¹Auto of Xavier, in *Autos tocantes*, 58; Auto of Joseph López de Gracia, in *Ibid.*, 79-80.

²"Mandamto del Gober, or y Cappan gel del p, l," in *Autos tocantes*, 79.

³Auto of Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 55; *Ibid.*, 57-58.

In thus complying with Otermín's demand, Gracia was acting in harmony with his own governor, Bartolomé de Estrada. Before the main body of refugees reached La Salineta, Otermín had written to Estrada, at Parral, that he feared that when the refugees should reach La Salineta they would be inclined to scatter to Casas Grande, Carretas, and other parts of Nueva Vizcaya, as well as into Sonora, whereas they should all be required to settle together in some designated place until assistance could be secured from the viceroy. Upon the receipt of this letter Estrada at once (September 24, 1680) ordered Captain Andrés López de Gracia, or in case of his absence or incapacity, Captain Alonso Pérez Granillo, *alcalde mayor* of Carretas y Janos, to go at once to El Paso to prevent any person from crossing into Nueva Vizcaya without Otermín's permission, under threat of the death penalty. If any person had already so crossed, and arranged to settle, his arrangements were to be annulled, on the authority of Estrada. Gracia was to leave his lieutenant at El Paso to carry out the order, and any laxity or lack of vigilance on the part of the officers was punishable by a fine of \$10,000.¹

It is not recorded when Joseph López de Gracia received Estrada's order, or whether Andrés López de Gracia went to El Paso at all. On October 5, however, Joseph López de Gracia published it "en el Pueblo de nra Señora de Guadalupe de passo Jurisdiccion de la nueva Bizcaya," in the presence of "many people of the pueblo as well as of the provinces of New Mexico."² As we have seen, Gracia had already agreed four days previously to carry out like instructions at Otermín's demand, for on that day Francisco Xavier returned to the Spanish camp at La Salineta with this information.³ Whether López de Gracia had at that time received Estrada's order I am unable to say, though I presume that he had. Otermín had already threatened with severe punishment any who should be guilty of desertion in the future.⁴ Thereby, together with the co-operation of López de Gracia at

¹Mandamto del Gober, or y Cappan gel del p, l," in *Auttos tocantes*, 79-80. I am dependent on this order for the fact that Otermín wrote to Estrada from La Salineta on this subject.

²Auto of Joseph López de Gracia, in *Auttos tocantes*, 79-80.

³Auto of Xavier, in *Auttos tocantes*, 58.

⁴Auto of Otermín, in *Auttos tocantes*, 55; *Ibid.*, 57.

the pass, the dispersion of the people at La Salineta was checked and the review was continued without further recorded interruption.

The total number of persons who passed this muster, including soldiers, servants, women, children, and Indian allies, was, according to the sworn statement of Otermín, 1946. During the retreat to La Salineta, Otermín, García, and others frequently stated that there were 2500 refugees in the two divisions. Of these it was estimated that there were 1500 in García's division and 1000 in Otermín's.¹ Taking these estimates as being approximately correct, it is seen that at least several hundred of the refugees crossed into Nueva Vizcaya without having been listed at La Salineta. Of the total number of the 1946, only 155 were men capable of bearing arms. The number of horses was 471, though, as the muster rolls showed, these were for the most part so poor and weak that they were unfit for military service. There was only one horse for every fourth person, even if we assume that none of the horses were used to transport the few provisions and other things which the refugees brought with them. The supplies are not listed, but the statement is made that the people were provided with meat, corn, and munitions. For this reason, notwithstanding the fact that a number of the guns were broken and practically useless, and although a great many of the men were entirely destitute of both weapons and horses, Otermín recorded his belief that his force was sufficiently strong to settle at that place, or some more convenient one near by, with a fair degree of safety.²

The Indian allies who passed in review before the governor were inhabitants of the four Piro's pueblos of Senecú, Socorro, Alamillo, and Sevilleta, and numbered 317 persons in all.³ These Indians, many of whom had already abandoned their pueblos before the revolt because of the ravages of their Apache neighbors,⁴ had

¹"Autto (de Otermín): Salieron el día 22," in *Auttos tocantes*, 8; "Carta (de Otermín á Parraga)," in *Ibid.*, 31; "Pareser del Cavdo (de Santa Fé)," in *Ibid.*, 37.

²"Autto de Junta de guerra," in *Auttos tocantes*, 61.

³Muster rolls, in *Auttos tocantes*, 60.

⁴Letter of the Cabildo of Santa Fé to the viceroy, October 16, 1680, in *Auttos tocantes*, 98.

followed the Spaniards, to whom they had at least outwardly remained friendly, as far as La Salineta.

(2) *The Decision to Settle at El Paso.*—With the women and children in a place of safety, and with the people and equipment listed, Otermín was brought at last face to face with the question as to whether or not an attempt should be made to reconquer New Mexico. This was no new question. At Isleta it had arisen for García and his advisers to decide in the negative, for such an attempt in their condition, believing as they did that the governor and inhabitants of Santa Fé were all dead, could not be thought of. When Socorro was reached and the testimony of Herrera and Chávez tended to indicate that the inhabitants of Santa Fé were still alive, the question had again come up, but it was almost unanimously agreed that in their weak condition the first thing to consider was the protection of the many women and children with them, hence it was decided to go on to meet the supply-train before even attempting to ascertain the fate of the northern inhabitants. When Otermín himself left Santa Fé, he did so as quickly as possible in order that he might unite his forces with those whom he thought to be at Isleta, there to decide on a plan for subduing the rebellion. However, the two divisions were not joined till Fray Cristóbal was reached, and there the question of a return was again discussed but was tabled until the women and children should be put in a place of safety. Now this had been accomplished, and the fighting strength of the survivors determined. It behooved all, therefore, "as loyal vassals of his majesty" to consider seriously the question of a return to Santa Fé. For this purpose Otermín called a council, composed of the members of the Cabildo of Santa Fé, the military officers, the friars, and all others who might wish to attend, in order that they might help him decide the grave matter, touching as it did both the spiritual and the temporal welfare of the province.¹

This order was published on October 2, and shortly afterward, all the men having assembled in the *plaza de armas*, the discussion was opened by Father Ayeta. He did not express his opinion as to whether or not an attempt at reconquest should be made, stating that since he had no experience in military matters such a

¹"Autto de Junta de guerra," in *Auttos tocantes*, 62.

question would have to be decided by the soldiers. If, however, they should decide that their strength was sufficient, then in his opinion the reduction of the apostates should be attempted. In this matter he spoke for the whole body of religious, who were willing to abide by the decision of the council and to assist in whatever was agreed upon. If it was decided to reconquer the province, he would aid the troops with the necessary provisions and munitions, though he could not furnish them with horses. For the use of the soldiers he offered twenty breastplates, four dozen stirrups, fifty bridles, and other necessities, as hats, shoes, and two hundred *varas* of linen for shirts; he would see that the women and children and the guard left behind were also provided with necessities; in case the council should decide that their means were not sufficient to attempt this reconquest, he would supply the camp in whatever place they might decide to locate it, with ten head of cattle and eight *fanegas* of corn daily; he called attention to the fact that provisions had to be secured eighty leagues away, and that the wagons should be started as soon as possible after more, so that the supply might not fail; he concluded by stating that he agreed to furnish the refugees with supplies only until the viceroy might be informed of their condition and aid them.¹ After Ayeta had spoken, several of the other religious expressed themselves as agreeing with him, some offering to lose their lives should the attempt to reconquer the province be made.²

Following the religious, a large number of officers and soldiers went on record as either favoring or opposing an attempt at immediate reconquest. Those who favored it were Thome Domínguez de Mendoza and Juan Domínguez de Mendoza, the former a man of long experience and great influence. Both advised accepting the aid proffered by Father Ayeta, and removing the camp to La Toma del Rio del Norte, whence they might inform the viceroy of events in New Mexico and ask him for provisions, equipment, and a presidio; while awaiting the reply of the viceroy they favored sending a body of troops to New Mexico to capture

¹*Auto* of Otermín and Ayeta, in *Autos tocantes*, 62-63.

²*Autos* of Otermín and the religious at La Salineta, in *Autos tocantes*, 63-64.

as many rebels as possible, in order to use them as peace emissaries to the revolted tribes. Juan Domínguez, however, made the proposed *entrada* conditional on the volition of the men and better equipment for both men and horses.¹ Eight *sarjentos mayores*, captains, and soldiers supported the arguments of the Mendozas, some on the condition that the people at El Paso were left with sufficient protection and provisions; others on condition that the choicest horses available in the surrounding region be given the soldiers.

The chief opponents of an immediate reconquest were Francisco Gomez Robledo, Alonso García, and Pedro Durán y Chávez. All three based their opposition on the jaded condition of the men and horses and lack of equipment; and favored appealing to the viceroy for aid. Robledo feared the unrest of the Mansos, Sumas, and Sonora Indians; García regarded the building of huts to protect the ill-clad citizens of first importance; Chávez wanted one hundred men for garrison duty and one hundred as settlers before undertaking the conquest. The cabildo of Santa Fé, which supported this faction, also regarded soldiers, arms, and supplies to establish a garrison, as prerequisites to the undertaking. Captain Pedro Marquéz, Sebastian de Herrera, and four other officers cast the weight of their opinion against immediate action.²

(3) *Fears in the Neighboring Provinces.*—Just at the conclusion of the *junta de guerra* Otermín received two letters from friends at San Juan Bautista in Sonora, which are especially interesting in this connection, since they illustrate how fears spread as a result of the revolt in New Mexico to other provinces, since they contained much the same ideas as had already been expressed by the majority of those at La Salineta, and since they exerted considerable influence upon Otermín in helping him reach his decision, and later influenced the authorities in Mexico when they were considering the plans that should be adopted for the reconquest of New Mexico. One of the letters in question was from Don Francisco de Agramontes, former governor *ad interim* of Nueva Vizcaya, a person of much experience in the northern provinces,

¹*Auto* of Otermín and Mendoza, in *Autos tocantes*, 64-65.

²*Autos* of Otermín and others at La Salineta, in *Autos tocantes*, 66-70. *Auto* of Otermín and García, *Ibid.*, 71.

and well informed in Indian matters.¹ The writer stated that the day before (September 15) he had received news of the revolt of the Indians, of the governor's wound, and of Ayeta having sent eighty musketeers (seventy-eight is the correct number) and supplies for their aid. After consoling Otermín for the loss of his province he suggested that it would be well to form a *plaza de armas* at El Paso and then send Father Ayeta to Mexico to represent the whole situation to the viceroy. In his opinion at least three hundred men, fully armed and able to fortify themselves in the villa of Santa Fé, should be sent to reconquer the province. By this means the Indians could be reduced and kept in subjection. The matter as he saw it was a serious one, for the province of Nueva Vizcaya was very liable to experience a similar misfortune should the New Mexican rebels be unpunished and the province abandoned, since the Janos, Yumas, and other natives of Nueva Vizcaya, seeing the success of their neighbors, would also revolt, and in this way make the ruin in the northern provinces of New Spain complete.²

It is thus seen that Agramontes viewed the revolt and apostasy of the New Mexican Indians with great misgivings for the security of the northern frontiers, and likewise that he recognized the necessity of maintaining the refugees in some fortified and contiguous place until the province should be reconquered. The same conclusions had been reached even earlier than this and independently by Father Ayeta, than whom there was doubtless no man better qualified to speak with judgment concerning the affairs in northern New Spain. On August 31, when Ayeta was under the impression that only the Rio Abajo refugees had escaped from New Mexico, he had notified the viceroy that he had had Pedro de Leiva elected provisional governor in Otermín's place, whom he supposed to be dead, in order that the refugees might be made to halt at El Paso when they should arrive there. For, as he stated, not to do so would mean that Parral would be lost. Moreover, he pointed out that El Paso was a suitable place for establishing a base of operations for the purpose of subduing the natives, possessing suitable sites for a large settlement, and an

¹Auto of Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 80.

²Letter of Agramontes to Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 81.

abundant water supply.¹ He further stated that he had written to Governor Estrada asking him for certain supplies (*uno docena de leperuscos*), but that he knew Estrada would not be able to send them even if he wished, because there was danger of his own province experiencing a similar revolt. He judged this because he had learned that the Indians in that vicinity had stated that they were going to devastate the valley of San Bartolomé and kill all the Spaniards there. He added that he inferred they would be able to succeed in doing so, because so far as he could judge the Indians were united as one, in view of which fact Estrada's forty soldiers would be insignificant.²

The other letter which Otermín received was from Juan de Escorsa, *sarjento mayor* in Sonora. The writer expressed his sorrow for the misfortunes that had befallen the province of New Mexico, unexampled in all New Spain, and of ill omen for other provinces. He stated that on September 10 reports of the revolt were received in those parts, but were taken lightly. On September 15 the early reports were confirmed by letters from El Paso and from Casas Grandes, among them being one from Father Ayeta to a certain Andrés. After consoling Otermín for his misfortunes and reminding him of the afflictions and tribulations of Job, Escorsa assured him that after the barbarians had arranged such a plan as that which they had executed, it might be well counted miraculous that a single man escaped.³

(4) *Decision to Delay the Reconquest.*—On October 5, before Otermín announced his decision as to whether or not he would attempt the reconquest of New Mexico before hearing from the viceroy, the *sarjento mayor*, Luis de Granillo, appeared before him and in behalf of all the people in the camp presented a petition asking that, because of the many dangers and inconveniences which

¹"Carta del Padre Visitador á el Exmo. Sr. Virrey," in *N. Mex. Doc.*, I, 564.

²*Ibid.*, 575-576.

³Letter of Escorsa to Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 83-84. Escorsa very cordially invited Otermín to visit him in his home at the mines of Nacatovori, saying that his *hacienda* some distance away was not finished because lumber, which cost almost its weight in silver, was so hard to secure. He concluded by stating that although he was deeply in debt, having lately spent more than 25,000 pesos, he expected to have his home ready for entertaining Otermín before the end of the year, "so that you may have much pleasure and recreation in it."

beset them at La Salineta, the whole camp be allowed to move to a place on the opposite side of the river near the monastery of Guadalupe. There, it was stated, pasture could be secured for the cattle, and huts built for the protection of the people. Otermín in reply assured the petitioners that the request would be granted.¹

The next day the governor formally announced his decision concerning the question of attempting the reconquest of the province at that time. In an *auto* summarizing the opinions expressed in the *junta de guerra* of October 2, he stated that he agreed with the Cabildo of Santa Fé and the majority of the other experienced men, and that an expedition would not be sent to reconquer the revolted province until further aid could be secured from the viceroy. In giving this decision the governor emphasized the fact that winter was approaching and that there was no shelter for the people. Moreover, because of the two letters which he had received from San Juan Bautista, he felt that it was more imperative to make a stand in that place than to attempt to make an *entrada* with his weakened forces. Since they could be furnished with necessary supplies through the liberality of Father Ayeta until royal aid might be received, he thought it best that his soldiers should not be separated until that time. Accordingly, he ordered the *autos* to be arranged preparatory to sending them to the viceroy.²

Having reached this decision Otermín instructed Alcalde Ordinario Juan Lucero de Godoy, and Sarjento Mayor Diego López, to notify Ayeta of this decision and in behalf of himself and of all the other people in the camp to thank the Reverend Father formally for what he had already done and for the proposition which he had made to continue to aid them. This was done, and in reply Father Ayeta sent Otermín notice that he was able by that time to increase the daily allowance of corn from eight to ten *fanegas* because he had bought since the day he began to succor the people, six hundred more *fanegas*, while two wagons were to be sent out on the 18th on a similar purchasing expedition. Moreover, he stated that only that day he had bought and paid for 1640 head of cattle in the jurisdiction of Casas Grandes, all of which he freely gave, asking that it be distributed among the people

¹*Auto* of Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 77.

²*Ibid.*, 85.

most needing it. In conclusion he supplicated the people to be patient, promising to send to Parral for wool to clothe them, and stating that he would reserve for himself and his order nothing more than the insignia of his patron San Francisco, and would sacrifice all for their welfare and comfort until royal aid could be secured.¹

VI. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REFUGEES AT EL PASO

(1) *Early History of the El Paso District.*—At the time the retreating settlers of New Mexico determined to make El Paso their base of operations in the reconquest of the revolted provinces, there were already established at that place a mission group administering to the Mansos, Sumas, and the outlying Janos Indians, and a small nucleus of Spanish settlers about the missions. In 1659 priests from New Mexico had founded Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe at the pass, and between 1659 and 1680 two other missions were founded in the vicinity, one called San Francisco, twelve leagues below, on the Rio del Norte, and another called La Soledad, among the Janos Indians, seventy leagues to the southwest of Guadalupe. All three appear to have been within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of New Mexico, and directly governed from that center. Evidence points to a civil organization of the settlers in the neighborhood as early as 1659, but the details concerning this phase of the Spanish activities in the El Paso region are more fragmentary than those relating to religious matters.

(2) *The Settlement at El Paso.*—It has already been shown that on October 6 Otermin made public his determination to encamp at El Paso, on the right bank of the Rio del Norte. By the 9th the camp appears to have been moved to the new site. The people were placed in three camps at intervals of two leagues. The governor and the Cabildo occupied the Real de San Lorenzo, and with them were five religious; all were sheltered in rude wooden huts. The Real de San Pedro de Alcantara was the second camp; it was administered by four religious. The third camp was Real del Santísimo Sacramento, in which dwelt Father

¹*Auto of Otermin, in Autos tocantes, 85-86.*

Alvaro de Zavaleta and other religious. The arrangements were probably completed by October 20, when Otermín wrote to the viceroy: "I am bivouacked and fortified on this Rio del Norte, waiting Your Excellency's order as to what ought to be done."¹

(3) *Provision of a Presidio*.—As far as the documents now available indicate, the paramount interest of Otermín and the Cabildo, during the next twelve months, was the question of a presidio of El Paso. In compliance with the recommendations of the governor, the central authorities took the matter under advisement in January, 1681, and in the same month decided to grant it, empowering the governor to carry out the plans. Whether or not Otermín attempted to found the presidio is not clear from the documents, but he appears to have formed some kind of guard to protect the citizens during his absence on the *entrada* made in November, 1681, with the intention of reconquering New Mexico.

While it is not purposed at the present time to continue the history of the El Paso settlements further than the departure of Otermín's army from El Paso for New Mexico on November 5, 1681, a few words will not be out of place here on subsequent events there. As has already been noted the presidio and the settlement at El Paso were not meant to be permanent. However, when Otermín returned in the winter of 1681-2 from his unsuccessful attempt to reconquer the province, it was realized by the authorities that several expeditions might have to be made before the people at El Paso could re-enter New Mexico. Accordingly, the Spaniards were required to settle in several pueblos and to make preparations for planting crops to maintain themselves there indefinitely. In this way the plans for settlements were given a sort of permanence. Events of the next few years, as will be shown later, served to make them entirely permanent.²

¹Letter of Otermín, in *Autos tocantes*, 102.

²The summary given above is based on material gathered from the four *expedientes*: *Autos tocantes*, *Autos Pertenecientes*, *Autos sobre los Socorros*, and an *expediente* without a title. For aid in the revision of the last few paragraphs of this paper, acknowledgments are due to Miss Anne Hughes.